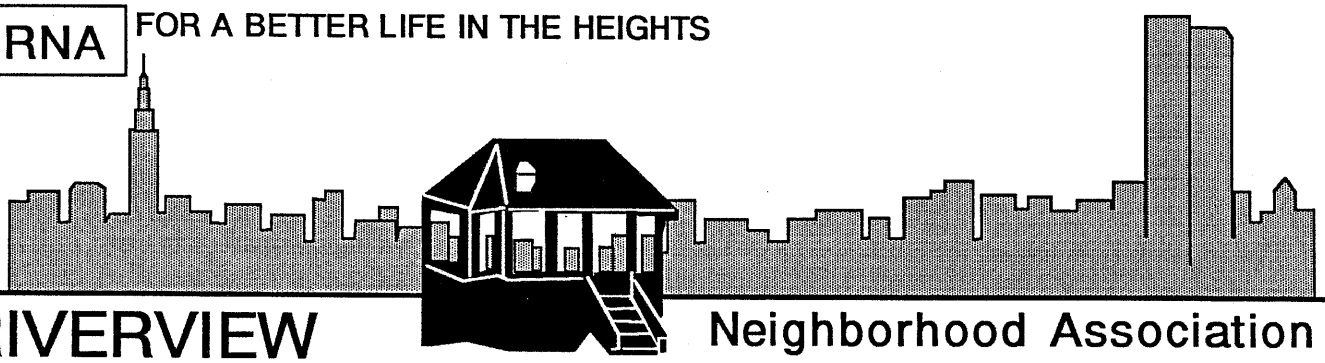
RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS



RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

SEPTEMBER 1989

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

OPEN LETTER TO THE CITY:

TO THE CITY OF JERSEY CITY
THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR : GERALD MCCANN
THE CHIEF OF THE POLICE: RICARD J. HARRISON
THE OFFICE OF PROPERTY CONSERVATION: ED COLEMAN, DIRECTOR

TO ALL CONCERNED:

WE THE MEMBERS OF THE RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND THE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY, ARE BEING CONSUMED BY THE PROBLEMS OF DRUGS, DRINKING, LOITERING, VANDALISM, CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND GENERAL LAWLESSNESS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. THESE PROBLEMS ARE BEING COMMITTED BY MEN AND WOMEN: WHITE, SPANISH AND BLACK, AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS :

A) FRANKLIN STREET AT OGDEN AVENUE
NEW YORK AVENUE
PALISADE AVENUE
WEBSTER AVENUE
B) WEBSTER AVENUE AT FRANKLIN STREET
GRIFFITH STREET

WE DEMAND THAT IMMEDIATE ACTION BE TAKEN BY THE CITY AND ITS APPROPRIATE AGENCIES TO STOP THIS TERRIBLE PROBLEM. THE LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE LIVING IN FEAR OF THEIR PROPERTY AND LIVES. THE UTTER LACK OF RESPECT AND LAWLESS BEHAVIOR EXHIBITED BY THESE INDIVIDUALS CANNOT NOT BE TOLERATED. IT IS DESTABILIZING GOOD, DECENT BLOCKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS. THE FIRST ACTIONS REQUIRED ARE TO IMMEDIATELY :

1) STEP UP POLICE PATROLS, AND ARRESTS IN THE AREAS IN QUESTION: BOTH VEHICULAR AND WALKING PATROLS,

2) NARCOTIC AND UNDERCOVER SURVEILLANCE OF THE SUSPECTED BUILDINGS AND INDIVIDUALS,

3) BUILDINGS INSPECTIONS TO CHECK THE PREMISES OF THESE BUILDINGS FOR ANY ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND, ALSO TO IDENTIFY ANY ILLEGAL LIVING UNITS,

4) OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION TO THE OWNERS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, INFORMING THEM OF THE SITUATION AND DEMANDING THEIR COOPERATION TO EVICT THE SUSPECTED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, AND

5) OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION TO ANY STOREOWNERS TO STOP ALLOWING THESE INDIVIDUALS TO LOITER AND USE THEIR PREMISES OR SIDEWALK AS A HANGOUT, DROP-OFF POINT, OR SAFE HOUSE.

WE HAVE BEEN MEETING WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND HOUSING OFFICIALS ABOUT THIS SITUATION SINCE JUNE 5, 1989. WE HAVE INFORMED, BOTH VERBALLY AND IN WRITING, POLICE CAPTAIN GALVIN OF THE NORTH DISTRICT, DET. D'ANGELO OF THE HOUSING TASK FORCE, SGT. MCDUNNA OF THE NARCOTICS SQUAD, MARK REDFIELD OF THE HOUSING CLINIC AND, MORE RECENTLY , COUNCILMAN DAN WADDLETON OF THE SITUATION.

SINCE THE MEETING IN JUNE, THE SITUATION AROUND FRANKLIN STREET FROM OGDEN AVENUE TO PALISADE AVENUE TO NEW YORK AND WEBSTER AVENUES SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN WORSE. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO ROBBERIES AT THE VIDEO STORE AND CHINESE TAKEOUT RESTAURANT ON PALISADE AVENUE AND FRANKLIN. TWO STORE WINDOWS HAVE BEEN BROKEN. AT THE END OF JULY, A MALE WAS ATTACKED AND MUGGED BY APPROXIMATELY TWELVE (12) YOUTHS ON THE CORNER OF PALISADE AND

Coming Events

RNA MEETING: SEPTEMBER 12, 1989
7:30 P.M. at the Harborview Health Care Center

GUESTS: COUNCILMAN DAN WADDLETON, *WARD D*

COUNCILMAN JOE RAKOWSKI, *WARD C*

FRANKLIN. THE CORNER OF OGDEN AND FRANKLIN SEEMS TO BE A NEW HANGOUT, USED AS A EXCHANGE POINT FOR DRUGS AND STOLEN ITEMS. THERE APPEARS TO BE GANGS THAT ROAM THE STREETS AND ASSUME THEY CAN DO WHATEVER THEY WANT IN THEIR "TURF".

THE RESULTANT PROBLEMS OF GRAFFITTI, GARBAGE AND DEBRIS DUMPED IN FRONT OF THE BUILDINGS AND IN THE STREET, DOUBLE-PARKED CARS, LOUD MUSIC, VANDALISM, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND UNDISIPLINED AND UNRULY CHILDREN RUNNING ROUGHSHOD HAVE FOLLOWED AND HAVE CHANGED THE NEIGHBORHOOD INTO A LAWLESS AREA. THERE IS A CLOSED STREET, MOUNTAIN ROAD, AT THE CORNER OF FRANKLIN AND OGDEN WHICH HAS BECOME A DUMPING GROUND FOR HOUSE GARBAGE, UNWANTED FURNITURE, AND ABANDONED CARS.THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER HAS ALSO BEEN AFFECTED BY THIS CRISIS BECAUSE OF THE DIRTY CONDITION OF THE STREETS AND THE LOUD NOISE FROM THE PEOPLE. IT SEEMS AS IF THE THIS HAS BECOME A SECTION OF THE CITY THAT HAS ALMOST BEEN FORGOTTEN BY THE CITY GOVERNMENT IN REGARDS TO THE FOLLOWING SERVICES: POLICE, HOUSING, SANITATION, HEALTH, AND FIRE.

WE CAN ALL APPRECIATE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT ARE CAUSING THIS SITUATION TO OCCUR, BUT WE CANNOT TOLERATE IT ANYMORE! OUR FAMILIES, NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS ARE IN TOO MUCH PAIN. WE ARE AWARE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS, BUT ARE FURIOUS THAT OUR OWN RIGHTS ARE BEING TRAMPLED ON BY THESE CRIMINALS AND IGNORED BY OUR CITY FATHERS. WE, THE COMMUNITY, ARE NOT ASKING OR BEGGING FOR THIS ACTION. WE ARE DEMANDING IT FROM THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF OUR LIVES AND PROPERTY.

WE ARE READY TO COOPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN ANY WAY NECESSARY. IF WE DO NOT GET SATISFACTION FROM THIS REQUEST, WE WILL BE FORCED TO CONTACT OUR COUNTY AND STATE OFFICIALS FOR RELIEF.

HUDSON COUNTY NARCOTIC TASK FORCE NEEDS YOU!

YOU can make a difference in the war on drugs
YOU may have information that can help us
WE HAVE A HOT LINE:1-800-962-0056

WE HAVE A POST OFFICE BOX
P.O. BOX1877
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

Your information will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. It can be ANONYMOUS.
PAUL M. DE PASCALE
HUDSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR

August 3, 1989

Mayor Gerald McCann
City Hall, Jersey City

Dear Mayor McCann:

On behalf of the residents of Harbor View Health Care Center, their families, the staff and in support of the Riverview Neighborhood Association, I am requesting your immediate attention to the serious condition existing in our neighborhood.

The area is being destroyed, our property has been vandalized. The residents have been disturbed by the excessive noise. One evening, the security extinguished a fire that was a threat to the safety of my residents and staff.

On several occasions the police have been called to control and quiet the area. The noise level surpasses that of the acceptable level in a residential district.

The filth and debris is deplorable. I requested that the Incinerator Authority monitor the area and to my knowledge they come once in a six month period.

Please, we desperately need your help in concentrating the efforts of your departments to maintain the area and provide a healthy safe environment.

Anticipating your reply.

Respectfully,
Marilyn Gilbert L.N.H.A.
Administrator

RNA FLEA MARKET

Our 5TH ANNUAL FLEA MARKET was a smashing success. We sold over 20 tables to dealers and over 20 tables for RNA and our members. It was our largest to date and in terms of income our most successful. While we were larger, we were better organized. The co-ordinating efforts of Gert Bogdan, Maria Tuzzo, Kathy Brennan, Carin Lewis, Jack Rea, Valerie Rea, Alice Soto, Bob Lewis, Vito Brunetti and Dee Ipsaro really paid off.

Thanks to those who helped man the tables; also Papo and the rest of the Torres family for transporting the tables to and from the park. Thanks also to St. Nicholas Church for providing the tables and Ray and Evelyn's Picnic Anytime for the rental of the hot dog cart. The New Laundry located on Bowers and Palisade was kind to lend us their facilities throughout the day for dealers and customers. As usual, our local A&P provided the supplies for our cake and food concessions. Bob Lewis successfully ran the hot dog cart and Gert Bodgan oversaw the cake table. Bob and Jack Rea, our Sgt. at Arms collected the monies and tallied the totals. Maria Tuzzo, our secretary, ran 50/50's throughout the day. Hank Cesari walked and talked to all the dealers and made sure everything ran smoothly. Our Police Dept. was present and provided a fingerprinting service for all the children and their parents.

We have learned much the last few years about running a flea market, and still have a way to go, but we want RNA's flea market to become one of the biggest and best in Jersey City.

CARIN LEWIS
Chairperson
FLEA MARKET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

During the Summer, RNA conducted business as usual. We have tried to keep our members abreast of all the things that affect our lives and homes – not an easy task when the lure of sun and fun keeps getting in the way, but we're still here and we're still making our presence known.

At our June meeting we celebrated the success of our annual Flea Market. In July, we joined our neighbors at the Planning Board meeting to hear close up from the representatives of Christ Hospital about a project they are proposing. A project that includes a 600-car garage and office complex to be built partially on the cliffs. In August, we discussed an increase in neighborhood crime and drug sales, a discussion which led in part to our looking into activities available, at no charge, for teens and children–activities that will give our young people something to do besides hanging out on corners.

Some of the other items of interest that were covered in our summer meetings were an update on the status of Tumulty Park (Ogden and Cuneo), opening of Ravine Road, the construction of the water tank on the Reservoir property, the progress made by the Save the Loews' committee, and the future plans of the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation.

The upcoming September meeting will showcase our newly elected Ward C and D Councilmen, Joe Rakowski and Dan Waddleton. Please join us Tuesday, September 12th at 7:30 p.m. at the Harborview Health Care Center and help us keep you informed about your neighborhood.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

DUES

RNA is in another calendar year and we ask that everyone pay their $3 dues. This money helps to defray the cost of mailing the newsletter. If you can't join us for our meetings, you may send your check, made out to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue, Jersey City, N.J., 07307.

CHRIST HOSPITAL UPDATE

The proposal by Christ Hospital to expand their existing facility by adding a medical office building and a 600 car parking garage continues to be an issue of substantial review and debate. The Planning Board had agreed to postpone voting on the approval of the plan at their July meeting. This was to allow the hospital and the Palisade Neighborhood Association time to prepare arguments concerning whether or not the proposal should be heard by the Board of Adjustment concerning the issue of primary use of the site. On August 16th, Christ Hospital invited representatives from the Palisade Neighborhood Association and RNA to a meeting to discuss the proposal. Issues concerning the impact of the project upon the neighborhood and surrounding area were discussed in depth with the hospital representatives. Among these were the effect on traffic, parking, the appearance of the neighborhood and the environmental impact upon the slope of the Palisades. The hospital appeared very receptive to the concerns of the neighborhood and have agreed to prepare alternate designs for the project. Ideally these new proposals will take into account issues regarding the magnitude, scale and location of the project and will be more responsive to the concerns of those residents who feel they will be adversely affected by the current proposed plan. As we go to press, Christ Hospital has agreed to postpone their Planning Board appearance scheduled for August 29th by withdrawing their proposal.

HANK CESARI

BACKGROUND:

There is a growing concern over the density in and around Jersey City which is causing congestion that the infrastructure cannot long endure.As reported in the Jersey Journal May 9, 1988 projected traffic flows would result in a grid lock condition throughout lower Jersey City. When considering the environmental impact of added fuel emissions coupled with the loss of greenery and air giving trees, the Christ Hospital parking project should not be permitted.

Throughout this state, the growing concern over loss of open space at the expense of increased density and the increasing degradation of mass transit systems have caused a major shift in thinking. Finally, the political fathers have begun to reshape their concepts and now the Hudson waterfront is the target of improved mass transit concepts, including light rail lines, trollies and bus lines. Christ Hospital's 600 car garage does not conform to the concept of less automobiles and greater mass transit. In Hudson County, in the most densely populated state in the Union, the issues of air pollution from automobile emissions will be greatly multiplied if Christ Hospital is permitted to build. The question is - Will this lot be used exclusively for patients, their families and employees or will this lot be used as a satellite parking facility for suburbanites commuting, through Jersey City, to New York City?

As we see it, Christ Hospital does not need this amount of parking and this close proximity to the Holland Tunnel and Journal Square will be used as a parking lot to shuttle commuters to and from the lot to Journal Square and/or New York City. The Hospital is in an ideal location for this type of parking facility. This speculation cannot be overlooked in the final decision. Can Palisade Avenue, the local off-streets and State Highway endure an added 600 vehicles? We believe not.

In the final analysis, we believe the increased traffic, removed on-street parking and added congestion would be a major downturn in the already fragile Palisade neighborhood. The Christ Hospital 600 car garage should be either drastically down scaled or not built at all - and for the public good the Palisade cliff should not be built on at all.

Louis Destefano
Pershing Field Neighborhood Association

July 31, 1989

RESERVOIR UPDATE

AUGUST 1, 1989: The J.C. Planning Board voted 5-3 to deny site plan approval for the construction of a five million gallon water tank that had already been started in the spring of 1989,in Reservoir #2 in the Heights, off of Summit Avenue. They voted against the motion saying they did not have enough information to approve the plan. Water Dept. officials admitted they failed to get proper approvals before construction began, but said that, as far as they knew, they didn't need any.Water Dept. Director Thomas Neilan told the Board they sought "to avoid as much bureaucracy as we could". Local residents disagreed and appeared before the Board to voice their opposition to the construction and the height and location of the tank.Although the City could order construction be stopped pending the Board approval, the Division of Buildings did not issue "a stop-work order". The Board agreed to consider the application of the construction on August 22.

AUGUST 22. 1989: The J.C. Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the site plan of the already-started water tank construction.The tank will be over 40 feet tall and approximately 19 feet will be visible from the street when construction is completed. The community is angry that this project was initiated without any neighborhood input and without seeking approval from the Planning Board.

DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS FOR SANE DEVELOPMENT (Hoboken)

The Observer Highway Plan originated from a proposal from Joe Barry, Hoboken's largest landlord and the publisher of the Hoboken and Jersey City Reporter newspapers, to build three buildings (between Bloomfield and Willow along Observer Highway), each with a high-rise tower. The City of Hoboken, the owner of the land, adopted a plan remarkably similar to the one proposed by Barry.The City Council then awarded the contract to build this project to Barry's firm, Applied Housing.

The DRSD organization, objecting to the height and density of this 450 unit project with three 17-story towers, filed suit in November of 1987. In March 1988, DRSD prevailed in court due to a conflict of interest on the part of Hoboken Councilman Steve Cappiello. Then the City Council re-approved the project without Cappiello's vote. When mercury was discovered on the middle site, developer Joe Barry revised his plan to include one massive 11-story, 115 unit complex on Observer and Bloomfield and move the remainder of the development to two city-owned Hudson Street properties. DRSD's current lawsuit challenges the new proposal for Observer Highway.

The essence of the lawsuit is that the "blight declaration" of 1972, which allows this redevelopment plan, is no longer valid since our neighborhood is enjoying an extraordinary revitalization. DRSD also claim that the city acted in an "arbitrary and capricious" manner in that appropriate neighborhood impact studies had not been carried out. Furthermore, DRSD has asked the court to consider the violation of the "Sunshine Law" which occurred when the City Council attended a private boat ride, sponsored by Joe Barry, where the project was discussed prior to Barry being selected as the developer.

DRSD has been lobbying the Hoboken City Council to scale down zoning changes proposed for the Observer Highway I-2 zoning district. DRSD's position is to limit heights to 6 stories, while the City Council favors an eleven story limit.

If people are interested in more information, contact Ron Hine at 659-8965.

"TELLING STORIES": NEW PAINTINGS

Valerie Kremer, an RNA member, is having a second one-person show in New York City which will open on Friday, September 8th from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Bowery Gallery in Soho. The exhibit will run from 9/8 to 9/27. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Sunday 12-6 p.m. The paintings address contemporary issues of "high" and "low" art, the effect of context on the individual work, and the nuances of appropriation. Through the successful integration of disparate sources the paintings raise questions about the cultural transcendency of art and image-making and the multiplicity of meaning that can and should be ascribed to a particular work of art.

NEWSLETTER STAFF
EDITOR: Kathy Brennan
ART WORK:Raquel Sweeney
CONTRIBUTORS: Carin Lewis, Dee Ipsaro,Alice Soto,Maria Tuzzo, Vito Brunetti
CIRCULATION: Debbie Torres, Michele Pierson,Jack Rea

Conrad's Corner

A 2.5 billion dollar plan by Governor Kean to unsnarl our region's jammed roads with a monorail running through a new tunnel from the Secaucus Meadowlands to the Hoboken Terminal seems an outrageous amount of money to spend for transportation to the Waterfront. It could bankrupt the taxpayers of the State just to help bail out the developers along the Gold Coast with their tax abatement and lower taxes to compete with New York.

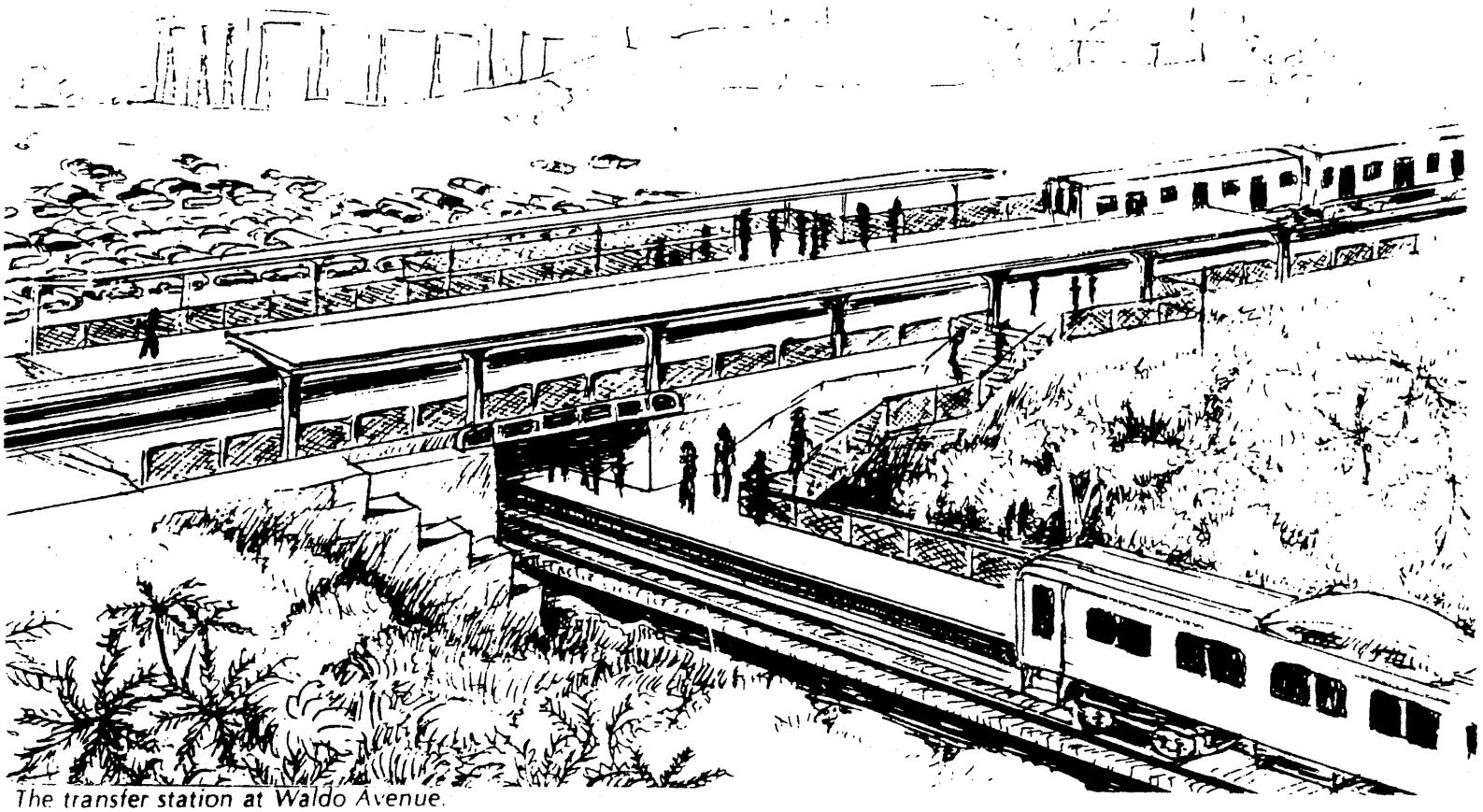
Instead of a billion and a half monorail and tunnel through the Palisades, how about using the existing Erie Transport of N. J. rail line from Hoboken to the Meadowlands and building a station with five sidings from the mainline into the vast parking area of the Sports Complex. The train can make it from Hoboken in seven minutes flat. A lot faster than a slow monorail. Besides it can use existing push-pull diesel equipment now standing idle after the rush hours.

A connection to the newly acquired waterfront Conrail line can be made from an existing spur tract from the Hoboken Terminal north to Weehawken and through the tunnel to North Bergen and as far north as Tenafly.

Going south the train could have a transfer to Path trains from a new station at the Waldo yards, for Newark, Hoboken, 33rd Street and the Trade Center continuing south to Liberty Park, Greenville Yards, Bayonne Military terminal and Eighth Street, Bayonne. A spur from the Greenville yards over the Hackensack River Bridge could make a direct connection to Newark Airport, all of which would be a great boom to transportation along the Waterfront and at minimal cost.

It's all there, all it needs is a station at Waldo and rehabilitation of a connecting spur from the Hoboken Lackawanna Station. Using self-propelled Bud cars would save on electrification and construction of platform stations along the line.

Was it really necessary for the State to spend another hundred thousand on a study, it will take ten years to build when we can make use of a hundred year old system we could use right away.



The transfer station at Waldo Avenue.

LETTERS TO RNA:

I am happy to announce that I have recently been elected to be the Jersey City Council representative for Ward C. I am anxious to help you, or your group in any way that I can.

If you will notify me of your meeting night I would be happy to try to schedule a visit in order to become better acquainted. Hopefully we can work together on any problems that you are experiencing.

You can reach me at City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, N.J. 07302, or call me at 201-547-4649.

Joseph Rakowski
Councilman

Just a few words to say "Thank you".
for being the great association that you are.
for caring so much about your community.
for not holding back when there is something to fight for
for all your help through the years...

Marie Murray

Letter to Annie Hart

Congratulations on the tremendous job you and RNA did on Ravine Road or is it the end of New York Avenue - I suggest that we end the confusion of this new scenic drive and hereafter call it Annie Hart Drive or the RNA Way.

Everyone is raving and it gives us all a lift to know that success can be achieved in this crazy town.

Janet Moore and Chart '77

ADVERTISING

RNA is startng to open our newsletter to give local merchants a chance to advertise. The merchants can either place their business card at a cost of $10.00 per month, or at a fee of $50.00 for the eight months (September through June) that the newsletter is published. For more information, please call Valerie at 659-7121.

(The following is an article by Meredith Jordan, from "The Jersey Sierran" a publication of the Sierra Club which is dedicated to explore, enjoy and preserve the nation's forest, waters, wildlife and wilderness.)

PLASTICS, PLASTICS, EVERYWHERE

Quick. Name just three places you've been in the last year where you haven't seen any plastic

That deeps woods hike? Well, even if you didn't use zip-locks to keep your things dry, chances are you walked past a discarded plastic cup, sandwich bag or piece of tarp.

The relaxing canoe run? Oh, sure...where was the last river you rode without passing some floating plastic?

And don't even think of your ocean outings; the federal Government Accounting Office reported that 46,000 pieces of plastic garbage are floating in every square mile of ocean! Millions of seabirds and seals, whales, dolphins and other marine mammals die every year from eating or getting tangled in discarded six-pack rings, fishing nets, resin pellets and other plastic trash.

So, the bottom line is we're surrounded by the stuff. Plastics, plastics, everywhere. That doesn't have to be a bad thing. After all, plastic is a material with many virtues; it is strong, light, water-resistant and inexpensive. It is designed to last forever, making it a tremendous asset in many areas of our lives.

Unfortunately, we are using this permanent material for more and more products that are made to be thrown away. Life the 2.5 million plastic bottles used by Americans every hour. And the 3,500 disposable razors used by the average man. And the 18 billion disposable diapers thrown out each year. And the 1.6 billion plastic pens. Get the picture?

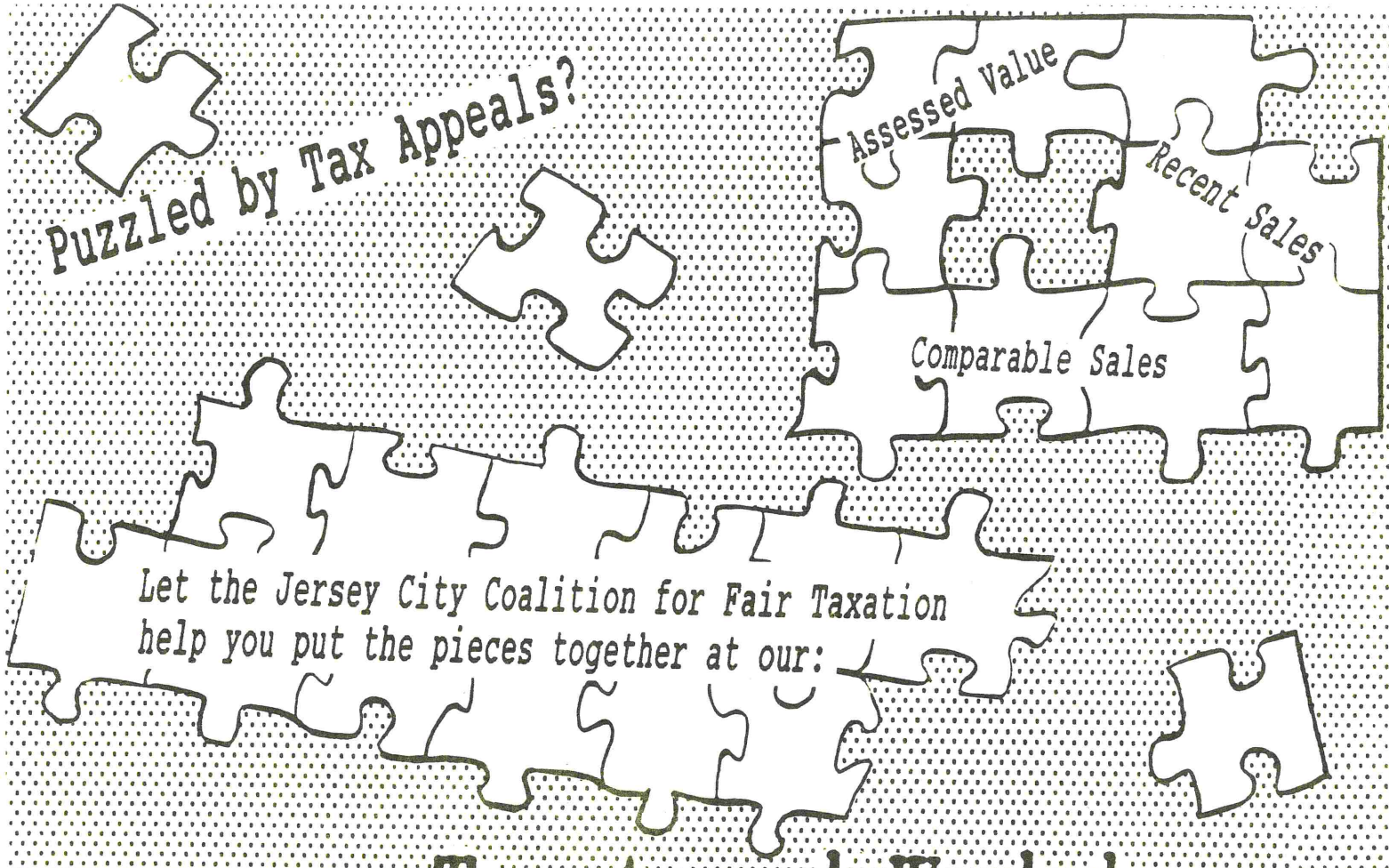
We've become a throw-away society. Each of us uses about 200 pounds of disposable plastic a year, 60 pounds of it just from useless packaging. We've fallen into the habit of buying cheap, convenient, disposable goods.

The manufacture of plastic causes pollution in varying degrees of seriousness from smog to the depletion fo the ozone layer. A key ingredient in many plastics is petroleum. In 1987, we used almost a billion barrels of petroleum to manufacture plastics - enough to meet our country's demand for imported oil for five months.

The use of many disposable plastic affects our health. Styrene, from which styrofoam is made, is a dangerous chemical. Even low levels of styrene exposure can cause vertigo, fatigue, nervousness, loss of memory. Disposable diapers dump over 84 million pounds of fecal matter into our environment each year. This raw human sewage contains intestinal viruses and bacteria which can live for over two weeks. These germs often end up in our streams and groundwater.

Finally, despite effort to manage their disposal, most plastics never go away. Whey should they--they are made to stick around forever. This isn't good for a country whose landfills are filling up so quickly that estimates have us running out of waste space in 10 years. It resists compacting and our landfill space is used for virtually non-destructible garbage. When incinerated, these plastics produce air-polluting poisons."

The article further discusses The Jersey Shore Group and their efforts to make people more aware of this serious problem. They have started a campaign to get people to use paper products instead of styrofoam. They are urging consumers to think about their shopping habits and select alternatives to disposable plastics. It's something to really think about.


Puzzled by Tax Appeals?
Assessed Value
Recent Sales
Comparable Sales
Let the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation
help you put the pieces together at our:

Tax Appeal Workshop

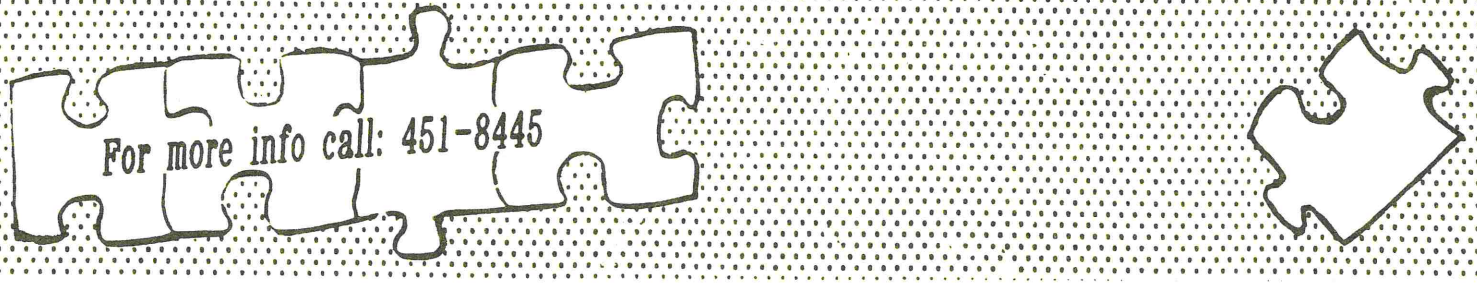
Friday, September 8 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM

St. Michael's Church 252 9th St

Coalition Attorney Nathan Wolf will be present from 6-8 PM to discuss the County Tax Appeal process, and we will have information and volunteers available to help you with:

- *How to research your appeal*
- *How to fill out your appeal form*
- *How to conduct your appeal hearing*

Please bring your tax bill and an appeal form



Jersey City Coalition For Fair Taxation

On Friday, August 11, the Steering Committee of the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation met with Mayor Gerald McCann and key financial advisers to discuss the modification of the 1988 property revaluation.

We feel that the current administration has taken three major steps toward restoring fiscal integrity to Jersey City:

- *Commercial assessments have been brought closer to uniformity and efforts are underway to equalize residential assessments,*
- *Municipal finances are being scrutinized to eliminate wasteful spending and to streamline operations. This, we hope, will result in a reduction in the tax rate,*
- *The Law Department has initiated action in State Tax Court against both RPA and its bonding company to preserve the $1.8M performance bond.*

We feel that these are significant steps, and as a result, we have directed our attorneys to temporarily suspend the legal action now pending in State Tax Court against the City, the Tax Assessor, and the Hudson County Board of Taxation.

These initial actions constitute a major victory for the Coalition in its 18 month battle against the grossly inequitable reval.

For 18 months we sought relief from an antagonistic administration that seemed to delight in taxpayer suffering. Now, in just 1½ months, the current administration has demonstrated a committment to relieving that suffering. The McCann administration appears willing to listen, and willing to work with the citizens, not against them, in tackling the problems of Jersey City. The appointment of Jane Feigenbaum (a member of our Steering Committee) as Finance Director bears this out.

Remember, our purpose in suing the City was simply to fairly distribute the tax burden. We know that taxes are still too high. Therefore, we will continue to actively monitor the budget as well as City spending.

Together we heightened awareness of this issue and eliminated the Cucci administration for recklessly squandering the taxpayer's money. None of this would have been possible without your help. THIS IS A SHARED VICTORY WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF.

Nevertheless, there remain numerous properties incorrectly assessed for the 1989 tax year. Last year, over 4000 taxpayers appealed and were reimbursed over $2M for overtaxation.

If you feel your property is not equitably assessed, you may appeal this year to the Hudson County Board of Taxation. To assist homeowners in the preparation of their appeals, the Coalition will conduct an appeal workshop on Friday, September 8, from 4 PM to 9 PM at St. Michael's Church on 9th St. Coalition attorney Nathan Wolf will be on hand from 6-8 PM. For further information, call the Coalition Hotline: 451-8445.

Jersey City Coalition For Fair Taxation
P.O. Box 13013
Jersey City, New Jersey 07303

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In All Fairness

The Newsletter Of

Jersey City Coalition For Fair Taxation

Volume I - Number 1 February, 1989

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Court Case Update
Mock Funeral Planned
Some "Appealing" News
Budget Blues
Exposed and Accountable
Our Readers Ask...
Meet the Candidates Series
Calendar of Events

CHAIRPERSONS' MESSAGE

Welcome to the first edition of In All Fairness, the monthly newsletter of the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation.

Together, we've made a great deal of progress over the past year towards reaching our goals of fair treatment for ALL Jersey City taxpayers, and fiscal responsibility within City government - a benefit to ALL Jersey City residents.

But for some time, we've seen the need for a way to "get the word out" in a detailed, unbiased manner. While the Hotline (451-8445) goes a long way towards filling that need, there's a limit to the amount of information that can be presented in a 2-3 minute tape. So, In All Fairness was created.

Each month, we 'll provide you with timely and useful information on all phases of our continuing fight for fair taxation and good fiscal management.

We'll include the latest on our court battle, reveal the deep, dark secrets of the City Budget, and let you know what our elected officials (City, County, State and Federal) are doing...and what they're not doing. We'll also let you know about upcoming events of interest and importance.

Finally, you'll notice that we emphasized ***TOGETHER*** above. That's because this newsletter is for all of us, just as the fight for fair taxes and good management is for all of us. So we encourage you to contribute -- send us your ideas, your questions, and even your criticisms. We don't have all the answers, and we don't claim to, but ***TOGETHER*** we can find them!

Our address is:

In All Fairness c/o
Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation
PO Box 13013
Jersey City, NJ 07303

Thanks!

Audrey John

COURT CASE UPDATE

On Friday, March 3, we will be in State Tax Court, before Judge Hopkins. Two actions will be ruled on:

- Motion to Dismiss filed by City and County
- Request for Summary Judgement filed by JCCFT

In early December 1988, the City Law Department, and the County filed a "Motion to Dismiss", to have our case thrown out. As usual, our opponent's attorneys are claiming that *"citizens should not interfere in* government" and that we have *"no right to sue."* Naturally, we don't agree and feel that since this is ***AMERICA***, we certainly do have that right and will pursue it to the fullest extent.

The other action is the filing of a request for "Summary Judgement" by our attorneys, Saul Wolfe and Nathan Wolf.

Recently, a case was decided by the Appellate Division (the next higher court from Tax Court), in which the city of Clifton was ordered to throw out a tax list because the city did not meet specific statutory deadlines for certifying the tax list and sending out the tax bills. This case is very similar to what occurred in Jersey City last year and as a result the tax list in Clifton was deemed *"void and unenforceable"*.

Our attorneys are asking for an immediate ruling by Judge Hopkins based on this precedent. The Clifton case highlighted important Constitutional requirements which *Jersey City and the County Board of Taxation clearly failed to meet.*

All in all, ***MARCH 3*** will be an exciting day in court. We encourage you to join us at the Essex County Hall of Records at 9 AM. For further details see "Mock Funeral Planned".

MOCK FUNERAL PLANNED

To most of us, our homes are our lives. To emphasize the message that the poorly conducted revaluation will be the death of Jersey City, the Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (DCNA is one of the groups which support the Coalition) is sponsoring a mock funeral procession from downtown Jersey City to State Tax Court in Newark on the morning of Friday, March 3. There will be buses and carpools and the procession will be led by a hearse.

To add a "revolutionary" flavor to the proceedings, we're encouraging all participants to sing along with our "unofficial anthem". Full songsheets will be distributed at the procession.

Also, while court is in session, there will be a rally on the steps of the Hall of Records. Note that the rally is NON-POLITICAL. This is required by the permit obtained for this event, but more importantly, it should be stressed that the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation is a NON-POLITICAL organization.

Therefore, ALL participants are strongly urged NOT to carry any partisan political signs, banners, etc. The JCCFT will monitor the demonstration to the extent possible, however, the Newark Police Department will be present to ensure conformity with the permit requirements.

Please remember that our purpose is at this event is to show support for our goals of fair taxation and responsible fiscal management. Let's not succumb to "election fever".

For further information on either the procession or the demonstration, call the Coalition Hotline: 451-8445.

SOME "APPEALING" NEWS

Although the results of the 7000 appeals to the County Board will not be available until late spring. The Coalition has decided to get an early start on appeals for 1989.

Given their performance this summer, we don't expect fair treatment from the County Board of Taxation during the current round of appeals. We do expect that a large number of those homeowners who appealed their 1988 assessments will probably appeal again in 1989. Since the tax rate will undoubtedly increase, additional homeowners will appeal.

Remember that since 1989 is not a reval year, if you appeal your assessment, it can only stay the same or decrease -- it cannot increase!

To help with the appeal process, the Coalition is taking two steps.

First, we have already requested 7000 appeals forms for the 1989 tax year. We fully expect these forms to be in demand and want to make sure there is an adequate supply.

Second, over the next few months we will be organizing workshops to help homeowners research and complete the appeals forms.

The County Board prefers that you not file until after the tax rate is struck. However, you can file your appeal ANYTIME after January 1 of the new year. And as Mary Ann Murphy (Attorney for the City) is so fond of pointing out, you are appealing your assessment NOT your taxes. So, WHY WAIT for the new tax rate at all? ***Thanks, Mary!***

As the workshops are organized, more information will be provided in this newsletter and on the Hotline. If you have been through the appeals process and would like to volunteer your expertise, please drop a line to our PO box. Remember, there are going to be a lot of "first timers" this year and they'll need all the help they can get. Thanks!

BUDGET BLUES

The Jersey City Board of Education approved a $206 million budget for 1989. This could add another $7 per thousand to our already crippling tax bills.

Enough is enough! We must fight back. Write to Mayor Cucci and your Councilperson and tell them it's time to trim the fat!

Have a question about the budget? Drop us a line and we'll check it out for you!

EXPOSED AND ACCOUNTABLE

Speaking of fat, over the last 6 months of 1988, many of the the "tubby tabbies" (fat cats) at City Hall got 12% raises.

This is public information and the Coalition has assembled it from a number of sources and will be presenting it in this feature: Exposed and Accountable. But why don't you do the honors? Write to us and tell us the high level City employees whose salaries you want to know about, and we'll deliver the goods.

Amusement, Amazement, and Outrage guaranteed!

OUR READERS ASK ...

This is the first issue of our newsletter, so as we await your letters we will address one of the most frequent questions/concerns which people bring up at public meetings:

"What happens if our case is dismissed by Judge Hopkins?

Although we are optimistic that he won't dismiss (especially in light of our request for Summary Judgement -- see Court Case Update), even if he does -- *IT ISN'T* OVER YET!

Our attorneys will file with the Appellate Division, a panel of three judges, which will determine if our case should be heard. Since the Appellate Division issued the ruling on the Clifton case, it is likely that they will rule in our favor. Then the case is returned to Judge Hopkins for full trial -- which is what we've wanted all along -- a chance to present the facts surrounding the reval.

Now, if after hearing the facts, Judge Hopkins rules against us, we go BACK to the Appellate Division and request that they hear our case. At the same time, we request that the State Supreme Court hear our case as a "public interest" case. Again, since the Appellate Division has already ruled on a case similar to ours, our chances of winning look good.

If this seems like a tangle of legalities -- well, it is, BUT it's really more of a "safety net" to make sure that no citizen is denied his or her right to a day (or week, or month, etc) in court. In fact, our opponents are entitled to the same appeals -- it's only fair.

What isn't fair is that we pay for everything -- twice. Our opponents have a virtually endless supply of money for appeals, transcripts, etc, etc. That supply is, of course, our tax dollars.

On the other hand, we must rely on the donations of our supporters to pay our attorneys, expert witnesses, transcripts, etc, etc. If we have to proceed to the State Supreme Court, this could be quite expensive.

"It isn't over until the fat lady sings!" Please contribute whatever you can to the Coalition. Thanks.

MEET THE CANDIDATES SERIES

Who should you vote for? Obviously, the candidate you feel is best qualified to tackle the problems that affect you most.

The problem is how to decide when all 10 candidates seem to be saying the same thing?

Announcing the Monday Evening Series - Meet the Candidates.

Every Monday from March 6 to May 8, the Coalition will be sponsoring a series of fundraising evenings at which one of the Mayoral candidates will discuss his views on taxes, the budget, and the reval.

These events will be held at "Kiki on 2nd" (2nd St between Coles and Newark, Downtown) and will run from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Tickets are $10 for each event and will include a hot/cold buffet. Tickets may be purchased individually or in blocks.

At this printing 5 of the candidates have confirmed either verbally (V) or in writing (W)

Mar 6	- Gerald McCann	(V)
Mar 13	- Glenn Cunningham	(V)
Apr 3	- Tom Hart	(W)
Apr 10	- Tom Fricchione	(V)
Apr 17	- Peter Murphy	(V)

Full information on scheduling will appear in the March issue of <u>In All Fairness</u> and will be available on the Hotline. For information on ticket sales, call the Hotline (451-8445) or call 420-0308.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 3, 9:00 AM, State Tax Court, Newark: JCCFT vs City of Jersey City. Call 451-8445 for details and see "Court Case Update" article

March 6 through May 8, 6:30-8:30 PM: Meet the Candidates Series at "Kiki on 2nd". See article for more details.

April 11, Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations Forum of Mayoral Candidates - Ferris H.S., Montgomery St. Call 435-8808 for more information.

April 27, 8:00 - 10:00 PM: St. Aloysius Forum of Mayoral Candidates, St. Aloysius H.S., West Side and Kensington

If you would like a speaker from the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation to address your neighborhood or community group, please drop us a line, or leave a message on the Hotline: 451-8445.

"...we must indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

---Benjamin Franklin

Remember, unlike the city, all of our support comes from donations from taxpayers like us...and like you. Won't you help by sending a check today? Thanks!

_____ OR _____

If you can't spare the money -- how about donating some time? We need volunteers to do everything from sticking on labels to helping seniors with their appeals, to translating our newsletter. If you'd like to help drop us a line at PO BOX 13013, JC 07303. THANKS !!!

MONDAY EVENING SERIES - MEET THE CANDIDATES

The Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation is sponsoring a series of "Meet the Candidates" fundraisers. From March 6 - May 8, you'll have the opportunity to meet and talk with each of the Mayoral candidates about tax and budget issues. For more information see "Meet the Candidates" article !!

Jersey City Coalition For Fair Taxation
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Jersey City, New Jersey 07303

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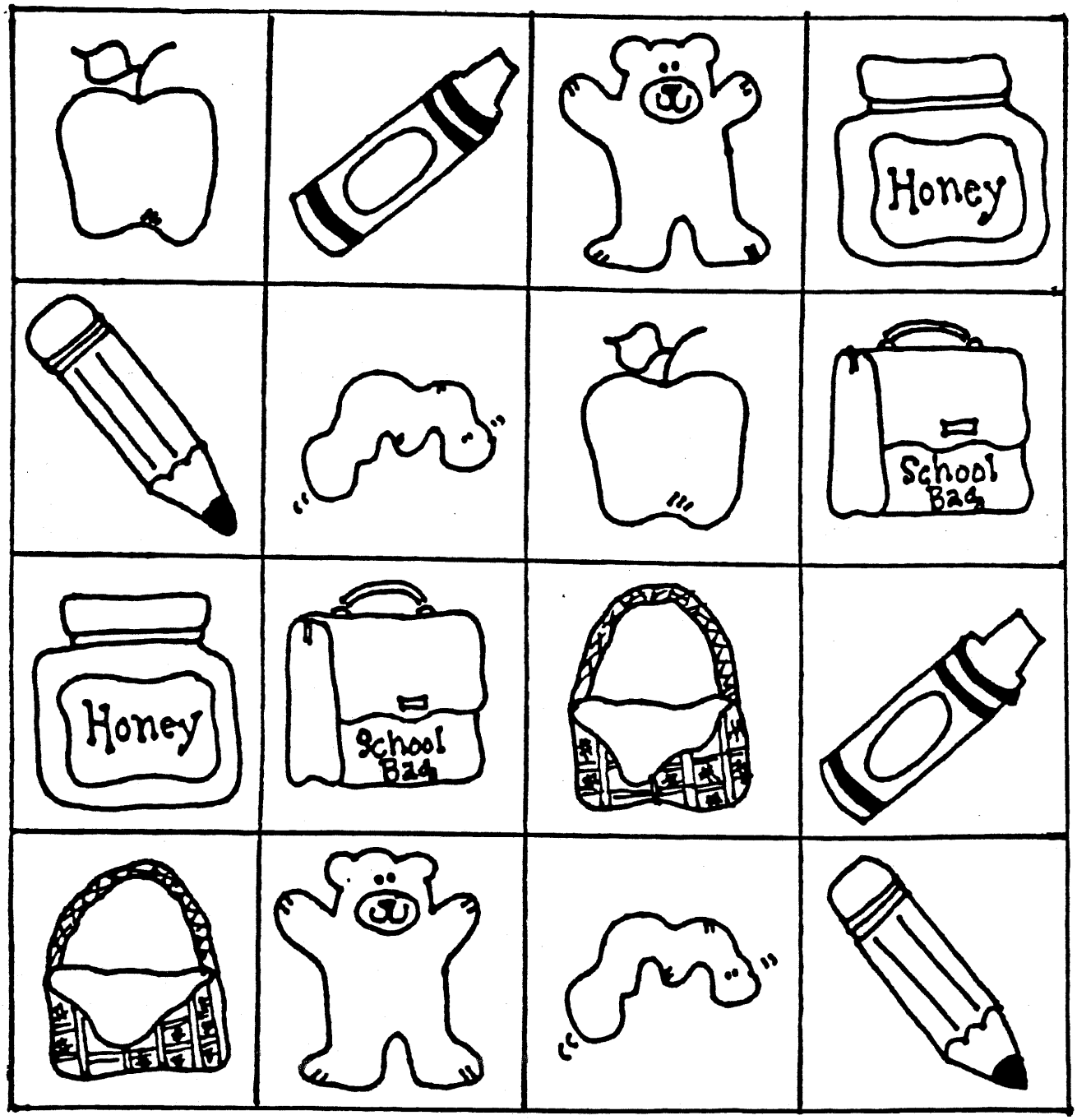
A SEPTEMBER CONCENTRATION GAME

Each of the boxes below contains a September picture. Color each picture and cut the boxes apart on the lines. To play the September memory game, lay the cards face down and turn over two cards at a time. If the cards match, you may keep them. If the cards don't match, turn them back over. Your turn is over. Try to remember where each picture is hidden as the other players take their turns. The person with the most matches wins the game.



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